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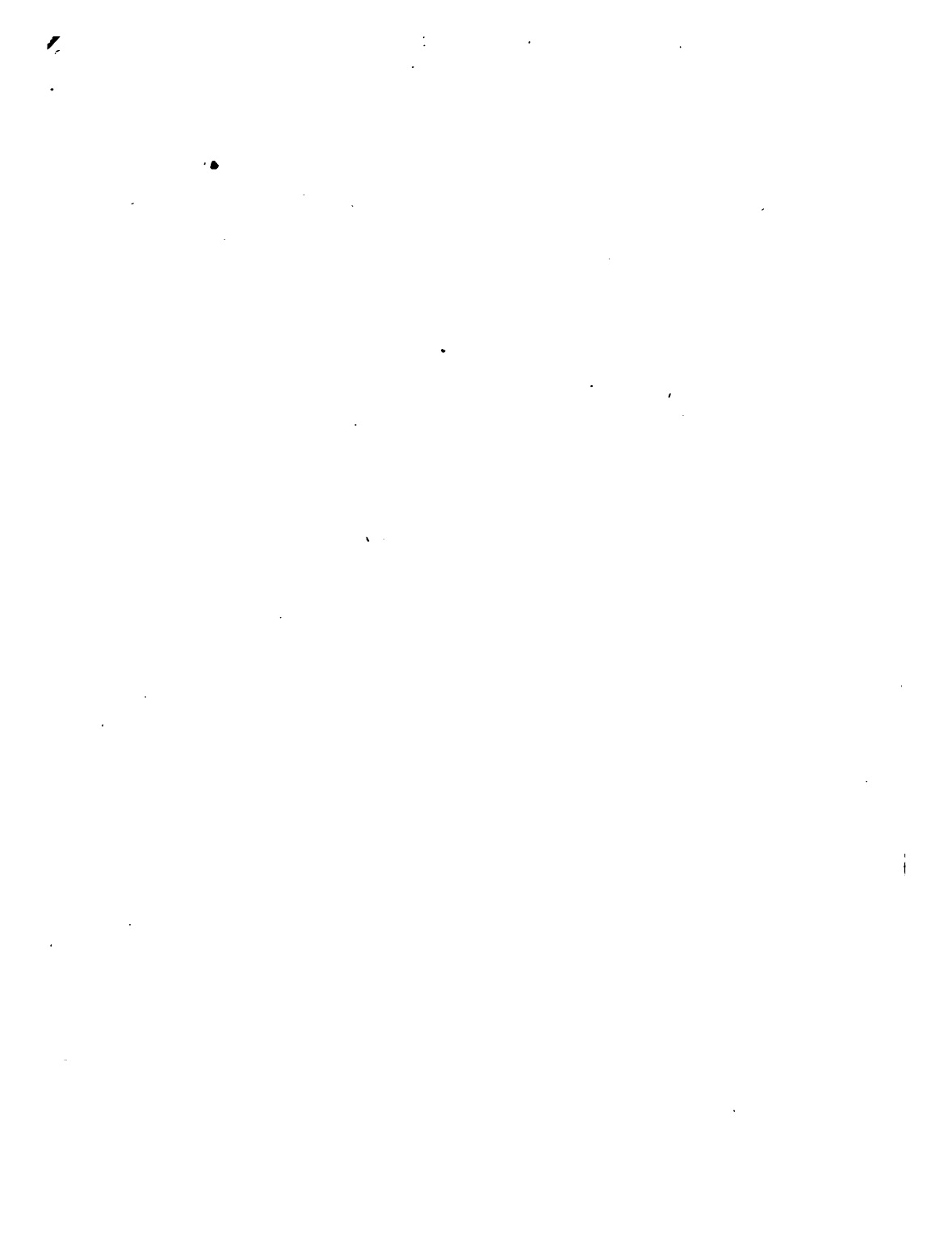
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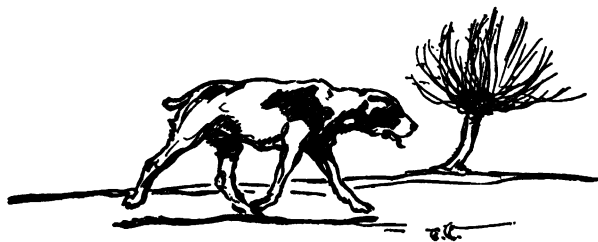
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PIERROT, DOG OF BELGIUM





**A BELGIAN CARBINEER CAME VERY HURRIEDLY ONE MORNING AND
LED PIERROT AWAY**

PIERROT DOG OF BELGIUM

By WALTER A. DYER ^L
AUTHOR OF
"THE RICHER LIFE," ETC.



Illustrated by Gordon Grant

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W.A.D.

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TO THE
COMMISSION FOR RELIEF
IN BELGIUM

WAGING A BLOODLESS BATTLE AGAINST
FAMINE AND THE RAVAGES OF
WAR, THIS LITTLE TALE IS
SYMPATHETICALLY
DEDICATED

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Belgium lies bleeding.

Across her level, lush meadows the harsh-shod hosts of war have marched. Beside her peaceful waters the sons of God have spilled each other's blood. Beneath her noble trees have raged the fires of human hate.

Her king and his brave warriors have fought to save that which was their own and, driven back, have left their smiling land to suffer the desolation which has ever been the conqueror's boast. Her ancient cities smoke. The inspired craftsmanship of an elder day has been destroyed forever.

Belgium lies moaning.

Across the winter sea we have heard the wailing of men and women among their ruined homes—honest townsfolk, simple Walloon and Flemish peasants, who had borne no malice

and had done no wrong. And amid the cries of anguish and despair there have come to me the weeping of a little girl named Lisa and the voice of a faithful dog whining for his master.

W. A. D.

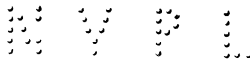
PIERROT, DOG OF BELGIUM



PIERROT, DOG OF BELGIUM

I

The children called him Pierrot from the first. That is, of course, no proper name for a Flemish dog, but you see Mère Marie had come from Dinant, where almost everybody speaks French, and she had been taught French in school. Besides, she had French friends in Brussels and was very fond of everything French and warm and southern. So she had often told the children stories about Harlequin and Columbine and Pierrot; and when they saw what a comical, clumsy little fellow the puppy was, and how much he looked as though he wore big, baggy breeches, Henri called him "drôle Pierrot," and wee Lisa clapped her fat little hands and laughed shrilly.



Jean Van Huyk had brought Pierrot home in his arms one spring evening and had tumbled him out upon the floor of the cottage to startle Henri and Lisa. But they refused to be frightened, for Henri was learning the rules of courage and Lisa thought at first that the puppy was a baby lamb. Straightway she fell upon him and sought to hug him to her plump little bosom, but Pierrot only bit her ear and made her squeal with delight, and then wriggled out of her arms and hurriedly waddled over to Henri, who rolled him over on his back and tickled his round little stomach. Whereat Père Jean roared loudly and old Gran'père cackled from his chair.

Then shaggy old Luppe, who had pulled Mère Marie's milk-cart for seven years, yawned tremendously, dragged himself laboriously to his feet, stalked over from the doorway and sniffed at Pierrot, and then turned back with a look of dignified boredom. By this ceremony Pierrot was constituted an accepted member of the household.



It was Luppe's advancing years, in fact, that explained the coming of Pierrot. It was sad to think of the day when the old fellow would no longer be able to trot into town with the milk and cheese, but Providence has set narrow boundaries to a dog's life, and Mère Marie would soon need a younger and stronger steed.

So one Sunday morning Père Jean had bade Henri dress himself in his best clothes, for they were to drive into Brussels to the dog market, and half the world would be there. The Belgians do not think it strange to go to market on Sunday, for it is an entirely different kind of market from those conducted on week days, and they put on their gay clothes and make a holiday of it.

When Père Jean and Henri arrived, the city was already alive with people and they made a pleasant sight in the bright sunshine. Père Jean found a place to tie his horse and then they hastened directly to the Grande

Place. This was a great paved square with imposing buildings on all sides such as the Hôtel de Ville and the Maison du Roi. There were a great many people in the square and they were all very lively and busy and jolly.

One side of the square looked like a great garden, for here was the flower market, and the florists vied with each other in their displays of plants and cut flowers. It was very beautiful, also it smelled wonderfully sweet, so that Henri fell under a sort of enchantment and Père Jean had to drag him away.

On another side of the square were parrots and cockatoos and canaries and birds of all kinds in little wooden cages. Some of the parrots were making comical efforts to talk like people, the song birds were whistling and trilling, and all was gay and colourful, which delighted Henri. But they had a bird of their own at home, and it was not birds that Père Jean had come to see.

At length they came to the dog market.

Four or five hundred dogs of all ages and sizes and colours lay dozing or stood pulling at their leashes. There were big, strong dogs like Luppe; alert black Schipperkes; Brussels Griffons, with faces like those of little bearded old men; Belgian sheep dogs with erect, pointed ears, short-haired brown fellows and beautiful long-haired black ones; all sorts of dogs from Great Danes to ridiculous little Dachshunds. There were capable-looking work dogs; mournful-eyed mothers; swaggering young bloods proclaiming loudly their desire for battle; awkward, blundering, adorable four-month-olds, and fuzzy little babies that wobbled on their sprawling legs as though made of jelly. Henri saw a dozen dogs that would have suited him perfectly, but Père Jean was apparently more difficult to please, for he went from group to group without making a selection. At last he told Henri that he could not find the sort of dog he wanted and that it was better to go home without

any than take one that would not turn out well.

Henri looked down the row of assuredly desirable dogs and his lip began to tremble a little. So Père Jean, instead of taking Henri home at once, bought some cakes for their dinner and told him he should remain to hear the grand concert in the afternoon, which pleased Henri so much that he forgot his disappointment.

At noon there was a great hubbub and bustle in the Grande Place, for the market was over and all the vendors must be out of there at once. In the afternoon the Regimental Band came in its wonderful uniforms and played stirring music in the kiosk until the shadows began to lengthen and Henri grew very weary.

It had been a wonderful day and Henri fell asleep that night with gay pictures dancing before his eyes and music sounding in his ears. This was happiness enough for little Henri, but Père Jean had not found the

dog he was after. He knew the value of the right kind of dog and he would have nothing else.

So Père Jean made a journey one day to fat Auguste Naets, the butcher of Vilvorde, who was famous for the dogs he bred. Auguste bragged much about these dogs. Their blood, he said, ran away back into the Middle Ages to the boarhounds of the Dukes of Brabant. Matins, he called them; and it is true that for a hundred years, when other men had grown careless of their breeding, Auguste's father and grandfather and great-grandfather had kept the breed pure, so that when the National Federation for the Breeding of Draft Dogs was founded a dozen years ago they deemed the Naets strain worthy of a certificate of merit with five red seals attached, which Auguste proudly had framed and hung in his shop.

Of the hundred thousand or more dogs that are used in Belgium as *chiens de trait*, none were finer than those which Père Jean

found in the kennels of Auguste Naets. They were large dogs, with something of the look of the St. Bernard about them, but with smaller heads and more lithe and rangy bodies. In colour they were all sorts of combinations of black, white, and tawny; Auguste held that colour meant nothing to a cart-dog. Their ears were long and drooping and their tails were docked when they were puppies to avoid interference with the harness. They would have been handsomer with long tails, but Auguste was breeding for utility rather than for beauty. There was a time when the dog-owners of Belgium cropped their dogs' ears to make them stand erect and pointed, but it was found that during their steady work outdoors in winter rain and snow beat into their ears and caused sores and deafness, so that the practice of depriving them of their natural protection was abandoned.

Auguste's dogs, like others of their breed, were tireless and powerful. They could

easily draw a load of 400 pounds, though 200 pounds was usually considered a one-dog load. Three dogs hitched to a 400-pound load could run with it at a steady, rapid trot for miles without apparent weariness.

Père Jean loved dogs, and he could have stayed all day with Auguste in his kennels, but to Auguste business was business, and he at length persuaded Père Jean to pay a good price for a likely looking beggar from the latest litter. That was Pierrot.

"He has the big feet and the large bones," said Auguste. "That means he will grow large and strong and live for many years, like my Jacques," and he pointed to the superb sire that headed his kennels.

So Père Jean took the fuzzy, awkward little puppy back to the little tile-roofed cottage he had built for his bride ten years before, and where Henri and wee Lisa had been born.

They were sober, industrious, thrifty folk,

the Van Huyks, and prosperous among their neighbours. In Belgium a peasant is always a peasant, and there is a wide gulf fixed between the rich and the poor, but Père Jean owned his little dairy farm six miles out from Brussels on the Waterloo Road, beyond the Forest of Soignies, and they were very comfortable and happy.

It was a pleasant country, with green pastures and meadows, nodding wheat and rye fields, and trim, orderly market gardens on every hand, and with straight, smooth, hard roads all leading to town between tall rows of poplar trees. Père Jean tilled the little farm and he and Gran'père milked the cows and made the cheese, while Mère Marie took the milk in to Brussels every morning in big brass and copper cans which she kept very clean and shiny.

Farther back from the city, where the farms were poorer and the market not so near, the peasants wore rough smocks and clumsy wooden shoes and lived mostly on

coarse rye bread and bacon and potatoes, with milk and rice and dried herring on Fridays. But Père Jean and Mère Marie always wore leather shoes when they went to town, and only the children clumped around in yellow sabots to save their Sunday shoes, and Gran'père because he preferred them.

Mère Marie was a plump, fresh-faced young woman with a beautiful, heavy crown of golden brown hair which was always neatly dressed, no matter how much of a hurry she was in. She went bareheaded, winter and summer, except when it rained; then she drew her shawl over her head. She wore a trim short skirt and a clean white apron.

On Sundays the family went regularly to mass, dressed in their finest clothes, and then feasted on hare and eggs and butter and cheese and many kinds of vegetables. In the afternoon Père Jean took his cornet and went to practise with the band, and sometimes he took Henri with him. It was a



wonderful band, for all Belgians love to make music, and little Henri could hardly wait for the time when his father would teach him to play, too. But when the band played the martial music, ah, then little Henri's bosom swelled almost to bursting, and he determined to be a soldier when he grew up. That would be grand, indeed! But Père Jean only smiled and told him that being a soldier wasn't all bands and fine uniforms.

Some of the peasants used dogs to harrow and cultivate their vegetable gardens, but Père Jean owned a big black horse named Medard, so that Luppe's only duty was to draw the milk-cart and to bark at night if strangers approached. When Pierrot grew old enough Luppe taught him to wake up and bark at strange noises and to keep quiet at other times, for a good watchdog does not waste his breath on the moon. When the huntsmen rode by with their *chiens de chasse* Pierrot would become very much ex-

cited and wanted to follow them, but Luppe explained to him that their vocation was a very foolish and frivolous one, and beneath the dignity of a *chien de trait*, though Luppe himself would often lose his head over the warm scent of a hare, or even of a rat or mole.

Old Luppe was, as you see, a very wise and experienced dog. He knew all the roads like a book and most of the streets of Brussels. He knew how to bring his cart safely across crowded thoroughfares without guidance, and to stop without instructions before the houses of Mère Marie's customers in the city. Also he knew how to pull his load with the least possible expenditure of strength and wind, and to lie down and rest in his harness whenever he stopped for a minute.

All these things he would one day teach to Pierrot, but meanwhile the puppy's education was chiefly in the fundamentals. When Luppe was away on his business Pierrot would romp and play for hours with the children, and as his first teeth dropped

out and his second set came, white and strong, he learned just how hard it is fitting to bite a soft hand or plump ankle in play or in love. Sometimes he would follow Père Jean and Gran'père about the farm or dairy, and they taught him to come at a call and to lie down and wait until he was wanted. This was a very hard lesson to master, you may believe. Also it was hard to learn that Sunday shoes are not meant to be chewed like a broth bone.

So Pierrot lived happily through his baby days on the dairy farm on the Waterloo Road. There was plenty of skim milk and other things for him to eat, and after he had overcome a slight predisposition to colic he began to grow very fast. His feet persisted in keeping ahead of him in growth, and he was still awkward when he ran fast, but his bones were getting big and strong and he was growing solid and heavy. As the cold weather came on his bark grew deeper and less squeaky and the stiff hairs began to show

through the soft puppy coat. Pierrot was fast growing into a fine big dog, black and white with spots of tan above his eyes and on his muzzle and forelegs.

Pierrot could not yet carry wee Lisa on his back as old Luppe could so easily, but to Henri he seemed large enough for anything, and the boy was very impatient to see Pierrot's serious training begun. So Gran'père, in his leisure hours, built a little toy cart and harness for Pierrot, and he and Henri began the lessons.

At first Pierrot was very unmanageable and seemed anxious to get into the cart himself, but after a while Gran'père made him understand that he was to go straight ahead when given the word and not stop until so ordered. Finally they taught him to turn when he felt the tug of a rein on his collar.

When at last Gran'père felt sure that Pierrot had learned his lessons, Henri was allowed to take him out upon the road with



wee Lisa in the cart, to the huge delight of that small, merry person.

One day, as they passed solemnly along the road, Henri marching sturdily alongside and wee Lisa sitting like a proud lady in her carriage, they met a Belgian soldier in a queer little bonnet and a dark blue uniform with red stripes on his trousers. Henri saluted as Gran'père had taught him to do, and the soldier came to a halt.

"Where are you going, monsieur and mademoiselle?" asked the soldier pleasantly.

"Just for a drive," replied Henri, a little bewildered at being thus formally addressed.

The grenadier, who was not much of a talker, stood regarding them with a quizzical smile. Then Henri plucked up courage:

"My father wears a blue coat with brass buttons, too," said he.

"Is he a soldier?" asked the man.

"N-no," replied Henri. "But he plays in the band."

“Ah, so! And shall you play in the band and wear a blue coat with brass buttons?”

“Perhaps. And perhaps I shall be a grenadier or a trooper.”

“And mademoiselle, what will then become of her?”

“Lisa? Oh, she will marry a burgo-master,” replied Henri; whereat the soldier laughed heartily, for he had a simple wit, and passed on.

Père Jean also laughed, in his big, hearty way, when Henri told of the encounter, but Gran’père shook his head and looked very thoughtful.

“It may all be,” said he. “Who knows?”

And so the winter passed with many small adventures, but on the whole tranquilly. Pierrot—he was getting to be big Pierrot now—was very much one of the family, more so than Luppe had ever been. Luppe was a fine, wise, able dog, but very business-like and unemotional. All the family loved Luppe and hated to see him grow old, for he

had been a faithful and willing servant, but it was Pierrot who really found a place deep in their hearts. There had been no children to play with when Luppe was a puppy, and that makes a great difference. He had early found his allotted place between the shafts, and his greatest joy was in the day's work. But Henri and wee Lisa had made a comrade of Pierrot, and so he grew up very warm-hearted and with a broader, deeper, more varied outlook on life than Luppe's. Luppe served a kind master and mistress and was content, but Pierrot needed love—given and received.

The winter was cold and a hard one for old Luppe, and he became a little rheumatic and stiff in his hind legs. He accepted more promptly every opportunity to rest, and rose with less alacrity than of old. Père Jean and Mère Marie both noticed this and began to turn their thoughts toward the further training of Pierrot.

When warm June weather came again,

Luppe improved, but it was evident that Pierrot must soon take his place. The youngster was only fifteen months old, and his body, which had grown with extraordinary rapidity, still needed filling out, but already he seemed nearly as big and strong as Luppe. He had a tremendous appetite, and it seemed to Père Jean that he should be earning his board.

One day Père Jean had a heavy hogshead in the dairy which he wished to move, and he and Gran'père could scarcely budge it. Medard, the horse, had been loaned to Joseph Verbeeck, the market gardener, to help plough a field for late cabbages. So Père Jean pried up the hogshead with a bar while Gran'père slipped rollers beneath it, and when Luppe returned from town with Mère Marie they hitched him to a chain fastened around the hogshead. Père Jean and small Henri pushed from behind, Gran'père stood ready with more rollers, and Mère Marie urged Luppe to pull. With great effort they moved the

heavy load a few inches, and Luppe began to pant painfully.

“It is too hard for him,” said Mère Marie. “He is no longer young. He will hurt himself.”

Then Gran’père thought of young Pierrot and sent Henri and Lisa to find him. They hitched him to the chain beside Luppe and Mère Marie gave the word to start.

Pierrot hurled himself forward mightily and fell back upon his haunches. Old Luppe looked at him disgustedly. That was no way to start a load.

Pierrot got up again and settled forward into his collar, his nails scratching the dairy floor in an effort to get a foothold, and before the rest were ready the big hogshead started to move. Then Luppe threw his weight forward, and Père Jean and Henri put their shoulders to it, and the hogshead began to gather momentum.

At first Pierrot pulled jerkily, with his forefeet scratching and his tongue hanging

out; he wanted to run with it. But Luppe growled at him and soon he settled down to the steady pull that counts. Gran'père began thrusting the rollers beneath the hog's-head, Mère Marie spoke shrill words of encouragement, and foot by foot the two big dogs dragged the ponderous load to the other side of the dairy.

Pierrot was panting and his tongue was dripping when the work was done, but he looked up very proudly at Mère Marie, as Gran'père unharnessed him, and wagged his stump tail violently as she spoke the expected word of praise. Old Luppe said nothing, but stalked off stolidly to his piece of carpet and lay down with a thump.

Then Père Jean went over to Pierrot and felt up and down his legs and pinched his back and shoulders.

"He'll do," said Père Jean. "I think you might take him to town to-morrow with Luppe."

Pierrot had grown up.

II

Pierrot's first trip to Brussels was filled with wonderful experiences. Mère Marie, very brisk and fresh-looking, routed him out before daybreak. The polished copper cans, filled with last night's creamy milk, she took from the cool water in which they stood and wiped them carefully. Then she brought up the low cart, with its two stout wheels and the framework slanting out from the sides, and set the cans in neatly with a round cheese and a firkin of butter. Luppe came up quietly, and Mère Marie fastened on his girth and collar, to which the reins were attached, and placing him between the shafts snapped on the traces.

All this, of course, Pierrot had observed many times before, but he was somewhat astonished when Mère Marie took down his



own harness from its peg and buckled it on him. Then she led him over beside Luppe and hitched him outside the left-hand shaft, snapping the traces into a ring Gran'père had bolted to the front of the cart. It suddenly dawned upon Pierrot that he was to be taken out into the world, and he began to prance and wriggle in his excitement. Luppe turned about and nipped his ear and told him not to be silly. Then Mère Marie felt of all the cans to see if they were securely placed, pinned her little shawl across her breast, and gathered up the reins.

"Eui, Luppe! Eui, Pierrot!" she cried, and the dogs trotted out into the cool morning, Mère Marie walking rapidly beside the cart.

After a little while they met another woman with a milk-cart like Mère Marie's coming out of a lane, and they all went along together, Mère Marie and the woman talking and laughing. Pierrot tried to pick an acquaintance with the other dog, but he ap-

peared to be a surly fellow, and Pierrot was forced to give it up.

As dawn broke there appeared on the road other people with dogs and carts—women with milk and both men and women with fresh vegetables and fruit. Some of the market gardeners had larger carts with two or even three dogs, and a few of the lazy ones rode and nodded on their carts.

The Waterloo Road runs straight into the centre of Brussels, but Mère Marie and the other milkwomen did not take that route. They turned off into a cross-road to the right after a while and at length came to the broad, paved thoroughfare known as the Avenue Louise. The houses began to appear closer together and there was much stir and bustle on the road. Pierrot had never seen so many people before, and he found it all so interesting and exciting that it required the combined efforts of Luppe and Mère Marie to keep him going straight ahead.

It was nearly four o'clock when they

started. A little more than an hour and a half later Pierrot found himself in the city itself, with houses stretching continuously down each side of the street. He might have been frightened but for the comforting proximity of Luppe and Mère Marie, who seemed not at all disturbed. It was growing noisy, too, and Pierrot was content to trot along very peacefully with his right side touching Luppe's shaft.

Arriving at the corner of a street that crossed the avenue, they were halted by an officious Garde de Ville with fierce-looking moustaches. He wore a blue uniform with a silver band on his cap, and a terrifying sabre hung by his side. Behind him stood a very dejected woman with her dog and cart, waiting until he should find time to take her to the station. Perhaps he had found that her milk was not fresh or had been watered.

"Ho! Sta stil!" commanded Mère Marie, and the dogs stopped.

Then the officer proceeded to inspect Mère

Marie's cans and to test her milk. He examined the dogs for sores and the harness to see if it chafed, and required Mère Marie to show him Luppe's drinking-bowl and the pieces of carpet for the dogs to lie on when resting. Finding everything as it should be—for Mère Marie was a careful milkwoman—he bade them pass on, and by six o'clock they were ready for business.

Mère Marie gave Luppe and Pierrot each a drink of water and a piece of hard dog cake, and after a little rest they started on their rounds. Most of Mère Marie's customers were in the Quartier Louise, where many of the English people live, and she seemed to be very welcome here. As the sun rose higher Pierrot found it very pleasant standing in the shade of the big lime trees and chestnuts of the Avenue Louise while Mère Marie took her bright cans to the houses. Carriages and automobiles rolled by constantly, and pleasant people passed along the sidewalk, forming a fascinating

pageant for Pierrot's entertainment. When he became restless and felt an impulse to go on without Mère Marie, Luppe, who lost no opportunity to lie down and rest, firmly restrained him. On the whole, Pierrot behaved very well for his first lesson.

And then there were many, many other dogs to be seen. It had never occurred to Pierrot that there were so many dogs in the world, and he was surprised not to find them all more excited about it. Luppe apparently paid no attention to them.

Most noticeable were the large carts of the poultrymen from Malines and other outlying villages who gathered at the covered market in the Rue Duquesnoy. To most of these carts five large dogs were harnessed, one between the shafts and two on each side; sometimes a sixth was used beneath the cart with his tugs fastened to the axle. These poultrymen travel in the night (Malines is fifteen miles from Brussels) in order to be early at market, and frequently they fall

asleep on their carts, leaving the dogs to trot along unguided. The intelligent animals not only keep up their steady pace without urging, but learn to avoid all difficulties of the road by their own initiative. ✓

Then there were milkwomen and laundresses with carts much like Mère Marie's, drawn by one dog or two. There were bakers and peddlers of fruit and vegetables, who mostly used high carts with their dogs hitched beneath. And there were noisy, shouting mussel vendors pushing their carts before them, with a dog hitched ahead to help.

Sometimes a poor man would pass with a nondescript cart laden with kindling-wood, garbage, or what-not, drawn by an undersized, underfed mongrel who was often hard put to it to drag his load, but for the most part the dogs were fine, big, strapping fellows used to their work, and apparently enjoying it.

The dog, as a matter of fact, is not only



man's closest four-footed friend, but when set to work is his most willing slave and helper. He is often intractable, but when he works at all he works with a will. Other animals that have been harnessed and trained to do man's work—~~horse~~, elephant, camel, mule, burro, ox, or reindeer—labour for the most part with a sort of stolid indifference and resignation. With the exception of the most intelligent elephants and horses, the dog is the only quadruped who displays a genuine interest and joy in his work. Whether hauling a canal boat in France or a sled in Alaska, he puts his heart and brain into his task and works like a man.

It did not occur to either Pierrot or Luppe to question the justice of their position. Luppe, in fact, was happiest when between the shafts. And the whole discussion as to whether or not the *chiens de trait* are cruelly treated is more or less profitless, as it all depends on the master. Some of the owners are undoubtedly cruel, and very few of them



have any real feeling for their dogs, but for the most part common sense demands good treatment; the owner is a fool who destroys the value of his own property by overwork or underfeeding, and for the most part the dogs are well fed and are kept in fine fettle for their work.

Belgium has been slow to enact prohibitory laws in these matters, but of late years a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has been active, and in some of the cities one may occasionally observe placards reading, "*Traitez les animaux avec douceur.*" And for some years past there has been, in Brussels at least, police inspection of harness to see that it does not chafe the dogs, and drivers of sore, sick, or lame dogs are at least warned.

Before noon Mère Marie had visited all her customers and sold all her milk, and Luppe knew when the route was completed and exhibited a growing interest in the prospect of home and dinner.

As they clattered across the Grande Place

they found many of the poultrymen also making ready for departure. Across the square a cry would be heard, "Eui, Vos! Eui, Sus!" And off would rattle another team on the road to Malines.

Pierrot was very weary when they reached home again, due to the excitement of new experiences as much as to the work done. He was very glad to curl up on his bed and dream of carts and dogs and people and rows of houses, and Mère Marie bade the children not to disturb him.

The next day Pierrot remained at home, but the day following he travelled again to Brussels with Mère Marie and Luppe, and thereafter for many days. Little by little Mère Marie and Luppe taught him the things a cart-dog should know, and gradually he ceased to be astonished and excited by the sights and noises and smells of the city, and when he reached home he was not so weary.

There came a day when old Luppe was evidently ailing, and Père Jean thought it

would be a good time to try Pierrot alone with the cart. So the next morning Mère Marie awoke Henri very early and they hitched Pierrot in Luppe's place between the shafts. Henri was to go along with Mère Marie to see that Pierrot did not run away while she was visiting her customers.

Old Luppe arose stiffly and shakily and came over to be harnessed as usual. Mère Marie pushed him gently aside, and Luppe stood for a moment looking surprised and hurt. Then his resentment against the usurper suddenly arose and he leaped at Pierrot's throat.

Pierrot had never been in a fight before, but he was strong and active, and instinct told him how to defend himself. He shook Luppe off and then the two dogs grappled. Pierrot was hampered by shafts and harness, but he held his own and did not attempt the aggressive. Mère Marie sent Henri running for his father, and seizing a milk-yoke tried to separate the two dogs.

Both were bleeding about the mouth but were not seriously injured when Père Jean arrived on the scene. Mère Marie held Pierrot by his harness while Père Jean managed to drag Luppe off and tie him, snarling and scolding, in the dairy.

Then Mère Marie made haste to load her cart, and soon they started out upon the road. At the sound of the departing wheels Luppe set up a long, despairing howl. Pierrot trotted proudly along, affecting not to hear, but a great sadness welled up in Henri's breast, and there were tears in the bright eyes of Mère Marie.

The journey to Brussels seemed very long and tiresome to Henri, but he trudged along manfully beside his mother, who sought to keep up his spirits with cheery talk about the city and the people there.

Henri had driven to Brussels several times with his father, but he had never before spent so much time in the streets, and he soon forgot his weariness in the interesting sights

about him. For one thing, he noticed that many of the other dogs wore muzzles, and he asked his mother about it.

“That is because they are ugly,” said Mère Marie. “They snap at people who disturb them and they try to fight other dogs.”

“But Pierrot wears no muzzle,” said Henri.

“That is because he is gentle,” said Mère Marie. “If you make a friend of your dog, and never beat him except when he is very bad, and talk to him a great deal, he becomes very like a person and does not want to bite any one.”

The Belgian cart-dogs are naturally good-natured, but their life has made them generally combative. When their masters take the trouble to treat them as comrades from puppyhood, they become exceedingly devoted and affectionate. Such a dog was Pierrot. He did not know what it was to have an enemy, and his love for Père Jean and Mère Marie and Gran'père and Henri

and wee Lisa had grown as naturally as his big muscles and rough coat.

Toward the middle of the forenoon Henri grew weary again and began sitting on the curb beside Pierrot whenever his mother left him. So Mère Marie decided that he needed a little diversion.

"See," said she, "here are *mes amies, les petites marchandes de journaux*. You will make friends with them while Pierrot and I visit Madame Courtois. It is a quiet street and Pierrot will not run away. We will soon return."

In a little round stall at the corner sat two pretty young girls sewing and chatting together behind their piles of magazines and newspapers. They looked up with smiles and greeted Mère Marie gayly as she approached. They, too, were from the South and spoke French rather than Flemish. Henri liked them at once.

"This is my little Henri," said Mère Marie to the newsgirls, "and his legs have become



fatigued: May he sit with you while I visit Madame Courtois?"

Both girls laughed merrily at nothing at all and made a place for Henri on the narrow bench between them, while Mère Marie and Pierrot started up a side street. One of the girls had dimples in her cheeks and the other had curly hair which blew about her ears.

"Where is the old dog to-day?" asked one of the girls.

"He is ill," replied Henri.

"And the young dog has learned to take his place?"

Henri nodded very solemnly. "Oh, yes," said he, "we have taught him."

Whereat both girls laughed again.

Soon they were all very good friends and Henri was telling them all about Luppe and Pierrot and Medard and Lisa and Gran'père and the yellow bird in its wooden cage. When Mère Marie and Pierrot returned, Henri was feeling much rested but rather

hungry, and one of the girls gave him a pear from her basket.

Henri turned and waved his hand to them as Mère Marie led him away, and the girls laughed and shouted after them: "*Au revoir, Mère Marie! Au revoir, Henri! Au revoir, Monsieur le Chien!*" And Henri laughed, too, for that was a very droll way to address Pierrot.

The cart was lighter going home, so Mère Marie allowed Henri to ride part of the way, and Pierrot trotted or walked steadily along like the willing worker he was getting to be.

That day Luppe was better, but Père Jean thought he had best have a good rest; so he was given a comfortable bed of straw in an unused stall in the little thatched stable, and Mère Marie and Henri and Pierrot went again to the city without him. And again Luppe howled at their departure and was very despondent all day.

One cannot say whether Luppe died of a broken heart or whether it was his advanc-

ing years and the rheumatism. Père Jean did not realize what it meant to Luppe to be deprived of his work in life; and, anyway, what else could he have done? The poor old dog failed rapidly. He would not eat, and he scarcely responded to the attentions which the whole family showered upon him. Only on the last day his eyes followed Gran'père about with dumb pleading in them; and when Gran'père at last knelt beside him, Luppe painfully dragged himself up into the old man's arms, and, with a great sigh, died.

Mère Marie and Henri and Lisa all wept, Lisa the loudest, and Gran'père and Père Jean were both very quiet and sober. It is not fitting that a man should mourn a dog as he mourns a brother or even a cross old uncle, but sometimes a dying dog leaves just as deep a feeling of loss. Luppe, with all his little faults, had been one of the family for so long that home would never seem quite the same again without him.

They buried him under the grapevine, in a

sheltered spot, and many a human grave has been watered by less genuine tears. Then Lisa brought blue cornflowers and red poppies and laid them on the little mound, and they all went silently back to the house.

Thus was old Luppe gathered to his fathers and young Pierrot reigned in his stead.



III

It was not long after old Luppe's death that a terrible thing happened. Père Jean came in one afternoon with a piece of yellow paper which he and Mère Marie and Gran'-père studied very gravely for a long time. The children were sent to bed early but they could hear their elders talking until very late. They could not imagine what it meant, but when Henri woke up once in the night he heard Mère Marie weeping, which was strange, for she was usually so cheerful. Perhaps she was thinking about Luppe.

In Brussels there seemed to be more excitement than usual, and nearly every one bought papers of the pretty newsgirls at the corner. All were serious looking and many appeared to be frightened. Also there were

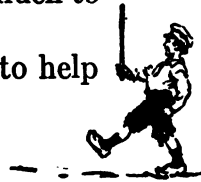


soldiers marching through the streets, which was a grand sight to Henri.

It was from the newsgirls that Henri at last learned what it was all about. It was war, which of course explained the soldiers. Henri's heart leaped as he watched them in the hope that he might see some fighting, but he was a little frightened, too. On the way home he plied his mother with questions, but she was very quiet and he did not learn much from her.

At last he found out that Père Jean, who had once served a term in the army, had been called to the colours and attached to a company of reserves. Every day he had to leave the farm and the dairy in Gran'père's hands and go away to drill. On these occasions he wore a uniform which, while not quite so gay as the one he wore in the band, was more martial looking. This made Henri very proud, but Mère Marie had not much to say about it.

Once, when Henri stayed at home to help



Gran'père, they heard a great sound of tramping and went out to see what it was. Up the road a cloud of dust appeared and through it the legs of many men all moving together and the glint of sun on steel. Presently the soldiers came, hundreds and hundreds of them, marching past the little dairy farm toward Brussels. Henri wanted to cheer, but Gran'père seemed so stern that he refrained. Together they stood beside the road, old man and little boy, very straight and rigid, saluting solemnly as the officers rode past. It was all most impressive.

Henri continued to go to the city frequently with Mère Marie, not because Pierrot was likely to misbehave, for he had learned his lessons well, but because Mère Marie more and more wanted him with her. Everywhere he heard talk of the great war and learned to keep his ears open. The Germans had come and there was fighting at Liège—though Henri did not in the least know where Liège might be. Every one was

proud of the brave men who were holding the forts, and Henri could understand something of that. He was proud, too, especially as his father was a soldier, though he did not understand why Père Jean had not been fighting and winning battles. Wounded men were occasionally brought in to Brussels, and Mère Marie seemed much troubled by the sight of them. Henri wanted very much to question them about fighting but was given no opportunity.

Then came the day when the terrible news that Liège had fallen sent Brussels into a fever of excitement. Some of Mère Marie's customers packed up and moved away to Antwerp or Ostend or England, so that Pierrot's route grew shorter. There seemed to be fear that the Germans might appear at any moment.

"The French!" cried the people in despair.
"Where are they?"

When Mère Marie and Henri reached home that day Père Jean was waiting ner-

vously in his uniform, with his rifle and accoutrements ready.

“We have been called to the front,” said he. “The Germans must be kept from Brussels.”

Not much more was said; it was not a time for talking. Père Jean kissed them all, even old Gran'père, and said good-bye, and hurried off down the road. Mère Marie was very brave and did not weep till he had gone. Then she pressed Henri and wee Lisa close to her and sobbed bitterly, which made the children cry, too, and Pierrot, who had not been unharnessed, came dragging his cart and thrust his moist nose among them in sympathy. But Gran'père stood alone by the road, looking toward Brussels, his shoulders squared and his lips closed in a thin line.

Then terrible events took place very rapidly: The Belgians could not hold back the Germans and Père Jean and the rest were forced to fall back to Antwerp. The Gardes de Ville in Brussels advised Mère

Marie not to come to town any more, so they said good-bye to the pretty newsgirls and their other friends and tried to explain the matter to Pierrot who complained the next morning because he was not harnessed to his cart.

That is why they were not in town when the news came that Louvain had been destroyed and many peaceful people who were not soldiers at all had been shot. But the news was not long in reaching the dairy farm, and Mère Marie turned very white. Some of their neighbours packed up their belongings and drove away, but Gran'père and Mère Marie did not know where to go, so they stayed at home.

Three Belgian soldiers came and drove off Medard and all the cows except one spotted heifer, and gave Mère Marie a receipt, saying that she would be paid some time. They all knew the Germans would soon be there, so it didn't matter much; and with only one cow to milk and no trip to make to town there

was less work to do. Gran'père, with the help of Mère Marie and Henri and Pierrot, began to harvest such of their small crops as he could.

On August 18th a frightened neighbour brought word that the King had left for Antwerp and that Brussels was in the hands of the Germans.

"Why cannot we go to Antwerp, *lieve moeder*," asked Henri, "and be with the King and Père Jean and the soldiers?"

But Mère Marie only shook her head; she could not speak.

Of all this Pierrot understood but little. He only knew that he missed the pleasant clatter of the milk-cart at his heels, and the shade of the lime trees on the Avenue Louise, and all the interesting sounds and smells of the city, and the sweet laughter of *les petites marchandes de journaux*. Also he missed the strong, kind hands and deep voice of Père Jean. But he, too, was soon to learn something of the meaning of war.

A few years before a regiment of *carabiniers* had started to use dogs to haul small supply carts and *mitrailleuses* or machine-guns. They are the soldiers who wear dark green uniforms with narrow yellow braid and yellow badges, wide-collared overcoats in winter, and queer, high-crowned hats with chin straps and plumes of glossy, green-black cockfeathers sprouting from green and yellow rosettes. That is, of course, the parade hat. In action they wear little round caps or take the feathers out of their hats and cover them with black oilcloth. The experiment with dogs proved successful, and now that there seemed a prospect of much fighting and marching in the rough country the army decided to extend this branch of the service and began to commandeer hundreds of strong, well-trained *chiens de trait*.

Just before the first Uhlan appeared at the Van Huyk farm a Belgian carbineer came very hurriedly one morning and led Pierrot away. The dog resisted at first but soon

found he had got to go and trotted off up the road by the soldier's side. The children clung to his rough neck and wept until Mère Marie dragged them into the house, but Gran'père stood very straight and still and put his hand to his forehead when the soldier and Pierrot marched away. The last thing Pierrot saw as he turned back at the bend in the road was the stiff, brave figure of the old man standing before the little farmhouse, and the last thing he heard was the wild wailing of wee Lisa who could not understand and would not be comforted.

Pierrot and the carbineer were soon joined by other soldiers with other dogs, and they all hurried along the strange roads together. It was a long journey, more than twenty miles, for they made a wide detour around Brussels, passing north through Anderlecht.

When they arrived at last at Malines Pierrot was placed in an enclosure with many other dogs. They were not used to being together in this way, and two men had to go



about among them with whips to keep them from fighting. But Pierrot, who was always friendly, found this contact with his kind rather pleasant, though he was greatly perplexed by it all and wanted to go home.

At night the dogs were fed and given straw to lie upon, but none of them slept well in the new surroundings, and their guards were tired and irritable before morning.

After daybreak soldiers came and took out the dogs two by two. Finally a big, bearded carbineer named Conrad Orts approached Pierrot. He patted Pierrot's head, opened his mouth to look at his teeth, and ran his hand down the hairy back and legs, as Père Jean used to do, and Pierrot liked him. Also he seemed to like Pierrot, for he smiled, and said, "*Un bon garçon.*" Then he selected a big, strong, surly looking dog named Jef, so Pierrot afterward learned, and led the two dogs on leashes out into an open field where there were tents and carts and piles of boxes and bundles and much bustling about.

They came to a strange little cart the like of which Pierrot had never seen before. It was a rapid-fire machine-gun mounted on two bicycle wheels. In place of shafts there was a single tongue with two collars fastened at the end, one on each side. One of these Conrad snapped about Pierrot's neck and the other about Jef's, and then fastened the traces. Then he trotted them about for a few moments till he seemed satisfied. The gun and carriage weighed less than 200 pounds altogether, which was a very easy load for two strong dogs on level ground. Other dogs were being harnessed to similar vehicles, only some of them had ammunition boxes in place of the little cannon. Then Conrad tied the dogs and went in search of the two soldiers who had brought them, in order that he might learn their names, which was a wise thing for him to do.

For a day or two Conrad Orts spent much time training Jef and Pierrot, taking them through water and over all kinds of rough

country that they might be ready for anything. Commands in the Belgian army are given mostly in French, which was strange to Pierrot, for Gran'père and Père Jean had taught him Flemish words. So he had to learn the meaning of such commands as "Halte-là!" "Marche!" and "Va vite!" But he and Jef soon learned to obey Conrad even when he did not hold the reins, pulling the little cannon with a will across creeks and up and down steep banks, and dashing with it through thickets where neither horses nor automobiles could have gone. The dogs soon discovered each other's ways and learned to save their strength for the hard places and to pull well together. And in spite of Jef's taciturnity, Pierrot found him to be an honest fellow, always ready to do his share of the work, and he came to like him. Conrad seemed much pleased with them both.

Then came a morning when there was great excitement in the camp of the carabinieri. Men were running all about and

officers were shouting commands. Conrad came and hurriedly harnessed Pierrot and Jef to their carriage and they started off on a run down the road toward Brussels with some of the other dogs and guns. When they had gone about a mile the dogs were unharnessed and tied to trees, and the guns were placed in the road. Presently the galloping of horses was heard and shots were fired, which frightened the dogs and made them try to break loose. But they were much more frightened when their own guns began to speak. A horrible din arose, and some of the dogs lay down and cowered and others pranced and howled. Men came and kicked them and told them to be still; all of the soldiers seemed hurried and excited. Pierrot was trembling violently and wished he were at home with Gran'père and wee Lisa, but stolid Jef took it all very calmly and that put courage into Pierrot.

A company of Belgian infantry came running up, and throwing themselves flat on



the ground by the roadside, or standing behind trees, they began firing at the Uhlans. Then, after a little, two armoured automobiles came rushing along and charged down the road, and the firing of the machine-guns ceased.

By and by the order came for the carbineers to fall back, and the dogs were quickly harnessed up again. Some of them had to be kicked and cuffed into action, but Pierrot and Jef obeyed Conrad Orts in spite of their fear. Beside their gun a soldier lay moaning, and Pierrot sniffed at him curiously. He could not understand any of it.

It had been only a little outpost skirmish, but it was Pierrot's first taste of war.

There followed many days of this sort of thing. Sometimes there were skirmishes, sometimes false alarms, but the dogs never knew when they might be called upon to run into action with their little cannon. Day or night, it was always the same, and it was fortunate for them that they learned to

snatch such moments for rest and sleep as were offered. And dinner-time became a very irregular affair. It was all quite different from the orderly course of a cart-dog's life in Brussels. But gradually they learned to know what was expected of them and responded willingly. In fact, there was an excitement about it which kept them constantly keyed up and eager. They got used to the smell of powder and the sound of firing, too, and Pierrot did not tremble any more.

In the main, Conrad was kind, though frequently hurried and a little rough, and there were never sweetmeats any more nor caresses. It was all very hard to understand.

Two or three times the camp was moved, and finally they withdrew to the circle of the Antwerp forts. And then once more Pierrot heard the sounds and sniffed the smells of a city. Conrad hitched his dogs one day to a supply cart and took them in to town. Here again Pierrot trotted along paved streets

between high buildings, and once his sharp ear caught the sound of milk cans rattling over paving stones. It made him feel very homesick.

On their way back they had to wait for a long column of soldiers to march past. They looked tired and dusty, and the tramp, tramp of their feet sounded strange in Pierrot's ears. Suddenly his eye was caught by a face he thought he knew. Could it be Père Jean? Perhaps he had come to take him home.

Pierrot sniffed, but in the strong man-smell of the marching troops he detected no familiar scent. He barked with all his might, "Here I am, Père Jean; here I am!" But Conrad bade him be still, and the soldier in the line kept his eyes fixed sternly ahead and marched on without turning. So Pierrot must have been mistaken. It made him very unhappy, and he whined in a low, whistling tone till the column passed and Conrad started on again.

There came a day when a fiercer battle took place than any Pierrot had yet been engaged in. The Germans had spread out their forces until they were very near to the Antwerp forts, and there was need of an action in force to drive them back again. Many soldiers were ordered hastily to the front—galloping dragoons, close ranks of infantry, and horse-drawn field guns. When the command came to the carbineers, the machine-gun battery was ready and the dogs waiting in their harnesses, and they started off at a run down the road.

After they had gone about a mile an officer came galloping up and sent them off to the left around a little wood, in which a battalion of infantry was in action. The rattle of their rifles made an incessant din, and now and then shrapnel shrieked overhead and shells exploded in the soft earth or among the trees.

The men urged their dogs to greater efforts, and they tore over the rough ground, dragging their guns and wagons in and out of



gullies and through underbrush at a mad pace.

As they skirted the wood they came into full view of a gray German column making its way slowly around the flank of the Belgians. The carbineers quickly deployed, falling on their faces behind any bush or hillock they could find, and opened fire. But the men in charge of the batteries could not hide. They must get their guns into action and take their chances.

There was no time to unharness the dogs, so they were turned about and were obliged to stand facing away from the tumult of battle as the machine-guns began to rattle directly behind them. It was very hard to bear, and some of them might have broken and run but for a half-dozen men who had been told off to squat by the dogs' heads and hold them steady.

Bullets began to whistle about their ears and to go plop! plop! into the ground about them. Now and then a man fell silently or

with a sharp cry, and over on the right Pierrot heard a dog's sharp yelp of anguish. Behind him Conrad Orts grunted and breathed through his teeth as he desperately worked his gun.

Suddenly one of the men at the dogs' heads grasped his throat, uttered a rattling moan, and fell over in the grass, and two of the dogs started wildly off, their gun bumping and careening behind them. Other dogs reared and snarled, and it was all the men could do to prevent a stampede. A panic seized Pierrot and the desire for swift flight, but Conrad turned about for a moment, crying, "Steady, boys, steady!" Stolid old Jef growled in his throat and Pierrot stood firm.

The fire of the machine-guns had checked the advancing Germans, and the carbineers began to dart ahead from hillock to hillock, continuing their fire. At length the Germans withdrew and the battle centre shifted. The carbineers were recalled and fell in with

their battery behind the trees to catch their breath. Just as they were turning a speeding bullet caught a spotted young dog that Pierrot had become acquainted with. He was trotting close by with his mate and their gun, and with a cry of pain and terror he leaped into the air and fell at Pierrot's feet, the red blood spurting from his shoulder.

In terrified amazement Pierrot stopped short and sniffed at his fallen comrade. Then Conrad urged him on again while the men cut the dead dog from the traces.

For the carbineers the battle was over for that day, but Pierrot had looked upon his dead and he began to understand.

IV

At length came the day of the evacuation of Antwerp, and the Belgian king and his brave but beaten army moved sorrowfully westward, leaving their fair land to suffer unprotected. The carbineers were sent on ahead with their battery, leaving the horse artillery and armoured motor cars and cavalry to cover the army's retreat. Some of the troops went on railway trains through Ghent, Bruges, and Ostend, but for the most part the army, including the carbineers, was obliged to travel on foot.

It was a forced march, long and arduous. Seventy miles they covered in three days, sometimes keeping to the roads, sometimes cutting across country, but always hurrying on until it seemed to the dogs as though their legs would collapse and their lungs burst.

Once they came out upon the seashore, and Pierrot would have liked to tarry here and contemplate the new wonder, but always there seemed to be the need for haste and Conrad would not let him rest. They left behind them the pleasant farms and the wooded country and came at length to the land of canals and dykes and sand dunes, with queer, pollarded willows along the roadsides and canal banks. Also there was a great deal of rain and mud which made the hauling of the guns doubly difficult.

At last, weary and wretched, they came to a halt, and the dogs were allowed a brief rest while the ranks were reformed and the men established camps and dug trenches.

It was here that Pierrot occasionally saw soldiers in brown khaki who sang wild songs and spoke in a strange tongue but who seemed very friendly. A few of them came one day to visit the carbineers, and there was much handshaking and smoking, but very little conversation. They seemed particularly in-

terested in the dogs, and one of them, a short, stocky fellow, with a very red face and a wide grin, strode among them as though he had been waiting for weeks to rub his hand up and down a dog's back and pinch a dog's ears. Jef remained coldly suspicious, but Pierrot wagged his stump tail violently and placed his muddy forepaws on the soldier's broad chest. Whereupon the soldier gave Pierrot a stifling hug and a pat on the head and walked quickly away.

This did Pierrot a world of good, for though Conrad Orts was a good master he seemed to have no time for caresses, and in Pierrot's heart there was a mighty craving for the love of man. When the brown khaki man was gone Pierrot stood looking after him and whining. Then he lay down, whimpering a little, and the great wave of homesickness swept over him afresh.

If a dog cannot fully reason, he can at least remember, and Pierrot felt that he had lost what was best in life and he could not under-

stand why. He saw it all again—the peaceful dairy farm with Medard and the cows; Mère Marie, with her fresh face and the shiny milk cans; the busy city and the laughing newsgirls; mild old Gran'père and merry little Lisa; the gentle hands and voices and the joy of being loved. But of course Pierrot was only a dog and war is war. One cannot be bothered with such trivial matters when the fate of dynasties is at stake.

Soon the fighting began again, only now there were no gallant dashes along hard roads or across green fields, but weary plodding through the mud, climbing in and out of trenches, short, heartbreaking charges, and hasty retreats. It was close-range fighting, and almost continuous. There was a constant roaring of big guns and the sickening bursting of bombs near at hand. The dogs were seldom unharnessed, slept by snatches when they could, and were often obliged to go hungry.

During one of the many encounters, a

miserable little affair among the dunes un-gilded by any of the fabled glory of battle, Conrad Orts suddenly tumbled over in the wet sand and lay still. The order to retreat was given, but no word came from Conrad. Jef and Pierrot stood perplexedly watching the other men and dogs flounder back around the sand-hills. Then came shouts and the sound of running feet behind them, and of hostile firing. Turning about, they saw the men in gray coming on, rushing from dune to dune. Partly through fear and partly through an instinctive feeling that they should return to their friends, the two Belgian dogs started off on a mad gallop after the retreating carbineers, leaving the silent form of their master where it had fallen.

By a miracle they reached the trenches in safety, though a rain of bullets fell all about them, and a man named André Wyns took charge of them and their gun.

And now a new burden was laid upon Jef and Pierrot, for André was a rough man and



knew little about the handling of dogs. He beat and prodded and kicked them, not in anger but in the mistaken belief that such treatment was necessary to get the most out of them. At first Pierrot was terrified and enraged and showed his resentment, for he had never been beaten in this manner before; but he soon learned the uselessness of rebellion and submitted with what grace he could. Eagerly he waited for the coming again of Conrad Orts, but Conrad never returned. As for Jef, he bore it all in sullen silence, but it was plain to be seen that he bore no love for André.

When the cold winter weather came there was added misery for dogs and men. Icy water stood in the bottoms of the trenches and the nights were raw and chill. It was fortunate for Pierrot that he had always been an outdoor dog, used to rain and frost and sleet, and that his rough coat was thick and matted. But that did not save his feet from getting frost-bitten after his runs through

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the water, and cut by the frozen mud and ice-crusts pools. Little balls of ice would form between his toes, which hurt him cruelly. Some of the men bandaged the feet of their dogs, but André Wyns seemed to have no time for that. He only beat them the harder when they started out stiffly or showed signs of weariness on the return. At night the men drew blankets around them and huddled about such small fires as they could find fuel for, but there were neither fires nor blankets for the dogs.

If Czar and Kaiser can bring such suffering to men, what chance that they will heed the aching limbs and bleeding feet of shivering dumb brutes?

The days and weeks slipped by and some of the dogs died of pneumonia, or, weakened by hunger and exposure, had to be shot. Pierrot, grown gaunt and haggard, was nearing the end of his strength. He had become almost insensible to André's beatings, and his mind had become so dulled that he

worked mechanically and without initiative. The happy days on the Waterloo Road seemed now so dim and unreal that he scarcely thought of them; only in the back of his brain there was always an aching, hopeless longing.

One midwinter morning at daybreak Pierrot was aroused from restless slumber by a great noise and confusion all about him. He and Jef had been sleeping unharnessed beneath their gun in a little hollow at the lip of the trench, huddled close together for warmth. In the night a light snow had fallen and partly covered them.

Pierrot rose to his feet, stretched, shook himself wearily, and stood blinking stupidly out upon a white world. Across the trench, a few hundred yards away, he could see the helmets of a great host of Germans advancing rapidly in solid ranks. The Belgian soldiers were hurrying to the escarpment to meet the attack, and already their rifles were speaking, while German bullets ploughed sharp lines

in the snow or buried themselves in the bank behind. Already one or two of the dogs who were in exposed positions were yelping with pain or had stiffened out upon the ground, and now and then one of the carbineers went tumbling down to the bottom of the trench.

The men in charge of the little battery made a rush for their guns, and a few of the dogs were hastily harnessed. Presently Pierrot saw André Wyns come labouring toward them with an armful of ammunition. He had nearly reached them when he pitched forward upon his face and rolled down the bank.

Then came the Germans—hundreds, thousands of them—not cheering, but pressing grimly on and filling the gaps as their comrades fell. There was a sharp order, and the Germans broke into a run and stormed the trench with fixed bayonets.

Then all was a frightful confusion of struggling men. They filled the trench, fighting desperately, and Belgians and Ger-



mans fell together in the awful agonies of sudden death. The Belgians fought stubbornly, but foot by foot the survivors were forced back, and the Germans swarmed into the trench, across the bodies of foe and comrade, and up the opposite bank.

One or two of the carbineers had succeeded in getting their machine-guns into action, but they were soon overwhelmed and the dogs who were harnessed were quickly bayoneted that they might not run off with the guns. Some of the other dogs fled and perhaps a few escaped, but there was little chance for them.

Pierrot and Jef stood waiting, the impulse to flee not having come to them. Men scrambled past them, but they stood dazed and terrified. Then a big brute of a fellow, his face distorted with the battle madness which sometimes turns a man into a fiend, came grunting and cursing up the bank, and finding the dogs in his path, thrust his bayonet wantonly through poor Jef's heart.

Pierrot saw his team-mate fall without a cry. The German put his foot on the animal and drew out his bayonet with an effort. A spurt of blood followed it and made a red pool in the snow.

Unreasoning rage seized Pierrot, and with what remained of his once agile strength he leaped at the man's throat and sank his fangs into the flesh. The soldier dropped his rifle, and grasping Pierrot in his strong hands sought to choke him and force him off. But the dog was crazed and blind with rage and insensible to pain. He felt the tearing of the man's neck muscles between his jaws and he tasted the hot blood. Then the man's grip relaxed and he fell backward. Pierrot fell with him, the breath well-nigh gone out of his body. But the man lay quiet, struggling no more, and Pierrot extricated himself and rose unsteadily.

The fight raging about him made no impression on his stunned senses. But suddenly another gray form appeared before

him; a heavy boot caught him under the chin and sent him sprawling. Then the report of a rifle sounded loudly in his ears and he felt a sharp and awful pain in his right hind leg.

After that, darkness.

V

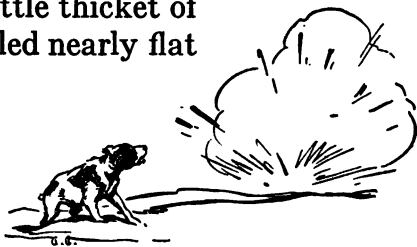
When the light again dawned upon Pierrot's distressed brain he was conscious, first, of an intense sensation of pain and weakness. Then gradually he became aware of a weight upon his chest and a severe throbbing in his right hind leg. He lifted his head but found himself unable to move or to reach his wounded leg with his tongue. Across his body rested the heavy thigh of a dead soldier.

Pierrot sank back and waited till the dizziness passed and his head cleared a little. Then the universal instinct for self-preservation and the need to struggle for his life awoke within him. Little by little, with long, painful waits between his efforts, he managed to drag himself free from the weight upon him.

He stood for a moment, trembling with weakness, as though to reassure himself that

he was alive. All was quiet about him, though the sounds of battle still raged not far away. He hardly noticed the forms of fallen men in the trench or heard their occasional moans. Then he dropped to his side again and made a feeble attempt to lick his aching leg. The foot was quite numb and the hair was matted and caked, but the bleeding had stopped.

As his small store of strength returned he discovered that he was cold as well as weak, and the need came upon him—the instinct of the hurt animal—to crawl away to some sheltered spot where he might either recuperate or die. It seemed to him that first of all he must get away from the horrible trench. Very slowly and painfully, with one leg dragging, he toiled up the bank and over the escarpment, and lay panting on the snowy ground. Then, after a little rest, he started on again unsteadily toward a little thicket of shrubbery that had been trampled nearly flat by the feet of the grenadiers.



It seemed a long way off, and he was obliged to stop often to rest. When at last he approached the thicket he was startled for a moment by a brown hare which scuttled out from beneath the tangled bushes and went bounding off across the snow. Pierrot felt no impulse to give chase nor any wonder that the hare should have escaped destruction. He burrowed under the broken branches and sniffed his way to where the hare had made a nest in the dry grass beneath. The spot was still warm, and Pierrot curled himself up in it gratefully and fell to nursing his wound.

For three days and two nights Pierrot lay in his hiding-place, sleeping much of the time. At noon the warm sun struck through the twigs which by night shielded him from the bitter winds. The Red Cross motors came and there were sounds of human activity in the trench. Soldiers marched by, but there was no rushing attack and no heavily shod phalanx came crashing through his cover.

In his dense retreat he lay undiscovered, waiting patiently for life or death.

During the third day he became restless and slept but little. He was feeling somewhat stronger and his mind had become more active. His wounded leg throbbed less severely. Toward nightfall an imperative call came to him to go forth.

Thus far, strangely enough, he had not felt keen pangs of hunger, for it is natural for sick dogs to fast. But now he was painfully aware of a consuming thirst. He had occasionally reached out and lapped at the cool snow outside his covert, but while that had felt good to his fevered nose and mouth, it had not sufficed. Now his throat was parched, his tongue was thick and dry, and his head ached. If you do not believe that dogs have headaches, notice how your terrier thrusts his head against your knee next time he is ailing, and begs for the pressure of your hand.

So Pierrot crawled out of his nest in the

gathering dusk and looked about him, stretching his stiffened limbs and lifting his nose to the keen wind. He walked once around his thicket and then started off across the frozen ground toward the dunes, making laborious progress, keeping to the shadows, sniffing for water.

Twice he heard voices, and once footsteps approached and passed by, while he lay still and waited, cowering. At last he came to a hollow where melting snow had formed a little pool. He broke the thin sheet of ice with one forepaw, and then, thrusting his nose into the freezing water, he drank long and gratefully.

With the quenching of his thirst a new life seemed to flow through his veins and courage returned to his stout heart. But he was still weak, and after a moment's indecision he crept back to his shelter.

On the morning of the fourth day he awoke refreshed. But now a new need had come to torment him. He was hungry.

Sharp pangs gnawed at his vitals and all his being cried aloud for food. He thrust his head out of his hiding-place and looked about, sniffing the air. Over the edge of the trench he saw the movements of men and the sun glistening on rifle barrels and German helmets. He drew back stealthily. Experience had taught him caution. He had had enough of soldiers and of war. He must wait.

All day he suffered the agonies of hunger and fought against the impulse to dash out blindly in search of food. And as the day advanced he was conscious of an ever-increasing desire to go home. A great longing filled him for his cozy bed in Medard's stable, for the home where there was always plenty to eat, for the kind hands that knew how to cure a dog's hurts, for the human love that had drifted so far into the past that it was like a dream of heaven. The homing instinct became his ruling motive; it obsessed him and drew him as with chains.

Repeatedly he started impulsively out from

the thicket, and as often the sight of soldiers drove him fearfully back.

When at last nightfall came and the trenches glowed with little campfires, Pierrot sallied forth, deliberately and cautiously. First, he sought again his drinking-pool and slaked his burning thirst. Then he passed on into an unknown country in the dark. He skirted the dunes, followed a little water-course for half a mile, and then struck into a shallow ditch beside a rutty road. He trusted little to his eyes, but ears and nostrils were constantly alert to detect danger, and he gave a wide berth to everything that suggested man to his senses. His sore feet had healed, but he was obliged to travel on three legs by reason of his wound, and he was still stiff and far from strong. Always his nose was searching earth and air for the scent of food.

Suddenly he stopped and lifted his head. From a shallow ravine a few rods from the road came a smell that at once attracted and

repelled him. There was the scent of men and of wood smoke. There was also the scent of food. The thought of soldiers terrified him, but his unwonted exercise had made him ravenous with hunger.

Irresistibly the smell of food drew him, and he crept stealthily toward the low bushes that grew along the edge of the ravine. Peering through, he saw with fearful eyes the glow of dying campfires stretching off in a long line, and the shadowy forms of prone men wrapped in blankets. On the opposite bank a lone guard paced slowly up and down.

Pierrot skulked silently along behind the bushes till he came to a spot where the food smell was very strong. Directly below him was one of the smouldering fires, and a few feet down the bank he discerned strewn about half-visible objects from which the smell came.

Grown reckless with famine, Pierrot crawled eagerly out from the bushes and fell upon the refuse of the camp. A hard crust

of bread, the bones and offal of a fowl, the beans clinging to the inside of a tin—he devoured them all impartially.

One of the tin cans, dislodged by Pierrot's eager nose, rolled noisily down the bank, and the sentry opposite halted and raised his rifle quickly to his shoulder. Pierrot crouched back, watching him. The soldier evidently thought better of arousing his comrades with a rifle shot, and suspecting that some animal was prowling about, picked up a stone and threw it at Pierrot. It struck with a thud beside him and bounded up into the bushes. Pierrot, thoroughly alarmed but still hungry, seized a large bone in his teeth and dashed back through the bushes. Not waiting to ascertain whether he was pursued, he ran for a mile across the frozen fields on his three weary legs before he came to a stop. Then, making sure that he had fully escaped the danger that threatened, he fell upon his stomach on the hard ground with the bone between his paws, and spent a contented half-

hour crunching it until the last vestige had disappeared.

When dawn began to show faintly in the eastern sky Pierrot sought a new hiding-place. At last he came upon the scattered remains of a haycock in a marshy meadow. The hay was damp and stiff with frost, but Pierrot dug his way beneath the largest heap of it and slept the deep sleep of exhaustion until the evening fell.

When he awoke he was lame and sore, but he dragged himself forth, yawned mightily, and set his face toward home.

He felt not the slightest doubt as to the general direction, but he had no idea of the distance. There was but one thing to do—plod doggedly along, with his right hind foot held clear of the ground. Now and then he made a detour to avoid suspicious forms, and again to follow up a scent of food. Twice that night he stumbled upon bits of refuse. It was scanty foraging, but it served to appease the pangs within him.

The next morning, having seen no soldiers, and finding the country apparently peaceful, he was emboldened to continue his journey by daylight, for the longing for home was strong within him. But the attempt was too much for his weakened body, and he was forced to give up before noon and crawl under a hedge to rest.

At some time during the afternoon a sound caused Pierrot to awake suddenly and to leap to his feet. A human form and foot-step brought him to a quick posture of defence, with bared teeth and bristling neck.

Before him stood a young woman in a coarse gray dress, torn shawl, and wooden shoes. She was not happy looking and pretty like the newsgirls in Brussels, nor neat and fresh-faced like Mère Marie. She was a squat, dumpy sort of person, with a pale face and dull eyes and her mouth was drawn down at the corners.

At first she was as much startled as Pierrot, and a look of fear overspread her coarse

features that was not pretty to see. But when she saw it was only a dog, the dull look came back to her eyes and she stood stolidly waiting.

Pierrot had never suffered ill at the hands of a woman, and the snarl died in his throat. The bristles on his neck lay down again and his tail began to move tentatively. He took an inquiring step toward the woman.

The ghost of a smile flitted across the peasant's face and she slowly approached Pierrot with her thick palms outspread. The dog advanced a little nearer, with a cocking of the ears and a look of pleased inquiry in his eyes. Then the woman perceived that he was lame. Her slow sympathies quickened and she approached and laid her hand on his head. Then she stooped and felt of his leg, not too gently. It hurt Pierrot, but he only gave her ear a little caress with his moist nose.

"Poor fellow!" said the woman in Flemish. "Come, and we will wash it."

Pierrot followed her as she walked toward a little grove of trees back from the road and entered the low doorway of a small hut. There was no one inside except an old gray cat, which at once retired to the rafters. At this the woman gave a low, short laugh.

The hut was a poor little place, indeed, and apparently the woman lived all alone in it, though there was a man's smock hanging from a peg on the wall. She moved about with a sort of hopeless indifference, hanging a kettle of water in the chimney and building a little fire of faggots beneath it. Pierrot lay down before it and fell asleep again, for he was still very weary.

When the water was warm the woman took an old rag and washed Pierrot's wound. He awoke and thumped his tail on the hard earthen floor, for the warm water felt very good. Then the woman tied the rag about his leg and bade him lie quiet.

Going to a cupboard, she brought out a half loaf of coarse black bread and cut off

two slices. Then she got a bowl and a little meal and made a sort of broth or gruel. These she placed on the rude table and drew up a stool.

Pierrot did not move toward the table, but lay watching the woman with interest as she folded her hands and bowed her head.

Presently she began eating her broth with a pewter spoon, but she did not finish it. She placed the bowl on the floor and Pierrot, not understanding how hungry she still was, cleaned it in a twinkling. Then the woman gave Pierrot one of the slices of bread and ate the other herself. The gray cat, it appeared, was expected to forage for his own dinner.

Pierrot stretched out before the fire again, with a feeling of peace and contentment such as he had not known for a long time, and slept soundly for many hours.

In the morning the peasant woman gave Pierrot half of her scanty breakfast. Then she drew her worn shawl over her head and opened the door of the hut.

"Come with me," she said.

Pierrot arose regretfully and went out into the crisp morning. The woman turned off toward the little wood, but Pierrot hesitated. She had been very kind, but she was not going in the direction of home. Not hearing his footsteps, she turned and spoke again, pleadingly.

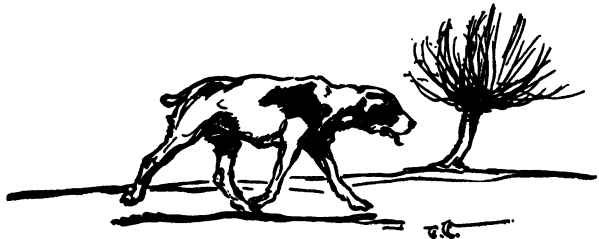
"Come with me," she said.

But still Pierrot hesitated. He was grateful to the woman, and his first impulse was to obey her, but from where he stood he could see the long road stretching toward the east, and he knew that off there somewhere were home and the faces of those he loved. The need to go on awoke again within him, and with one little bark of farewell he turned and hobbled rapidly off on his three legs. The woman stood gazing after him for a few moments, a pathetic object in the keen morning wind. Then she brushed the back of her hand across her eyes and turned slowly away among the trees.

It was no three days' journey that Pierrot had undertaken this time, for though he had no load dragging at his heels, he found that he could not travel fast nor very far at a time. He had only his instinct and a vague memory to guide him, and often the winding road led him astray, so that he covered many needless miles.

But he had ceased to fear the soldiers, and dared now to travel by daylight and thus made better progress, though he still made wide detours to avoid suspicious looking people. The clumsy bandage became loose and Pierrot tore it off with his teeth, but his wounded leg did not hurt him now save when he attempted to use it.

It was weary work, travelling on three legs and on scanty rations. Sometimes he was obliged to sink down exhausted in a sheltered spot and wait till his strength returned. Sometimes, when the pangs of hunger seized him, he was forced to waste valuable hours hunting for food.



People in houses and peasants in the fields he learned not to fear, and twice he was invited into cottages and fed. But always he managed to get away after he was rested and never knew that he was guilty of ingratitude. Sometimes men on the road or in the fields called to him, but he would not stop. Once a boy gave chase, but Pierrot put all the speed he could muster into his three legs and contrived to escape, though he was obliged to lie panting for a long time after this race before he could recover. It was hard for him to understand this loss of his old-time power.

He kept no account of the days and only knew that the way seemed endless. But one afternoon the conviction seized him that he was nearing his journey's end. There was nothing familiar in the objects in the landscape; he had never been there before. But something inside him told him it was so. He pressed on eagerly, whining a little to himself as a terrier whines when he scents a mole. Surely, over the next hill, or around the

next bend, he would come upon the old, familiar scenes—cottage and byre and the blessed fields of home. Over there, just beyond, were the well-remembered faces, the happy voices of the children, the capable, kind hands of Mère Marie.

In his zestful haste he overtaxed his strength again, and, trembling with excitement and fatigue, he was obliged to seek rest before sunset.

He slept fitfully that night. Frequently his dreams awoke him and he stood peering into the darkness, listening for he knew not what, before he remembered and lay down again. But though he rested ill, he was abroad before daybreak, padding laboriously on.

All that day he travelled without food or rest, stopping only for an occasional drink when opportunity offered. There was never a doubt in his mind that to-day he would be home again. No sound or scent or unaccustomed sight lured him from his straight course. Then at length he came out upon

the road he knew, with its rows of poplar trees, and his heart began to hammer at his ribs. Heedless of pain and weariness, he dashed blindly on, around the bend in the road, up the little lane, to the place where home had been.

Pierrot stopped in a panic of bewilderment. The tile-roofed house was gone and only blackened timbers remained. He sniffed about among the ruins for a time, greatly troubled, and then circled around toward the outbuildings. They, too, were gone, but nearby was a little shack that he did not remember.

Night was coming on again, and Pierrot was feeling very weary and forlorn and hopeless. Was this, then, the empty end of his long, painful quest? Where was the pretty little home and the comfortable cow barn and the people he used to love? Had all vanished into thin air?

Pierrot dragged himself disconsolately over to the strange little shack and sniffed at

the crack under the door. Something in the scent drove him into a sudden frenzy of excitement. He began to scratch vigorously and gave voice to one short, sharp bark.



VI

After the Belgian soldier had marched away with Pierrot, hard times fell upon the little dairy farm of the Van Huyks. Soon the Germans came and drove off their one heifer, and there was no more milk or butter for them. They also took all of the wheat and most of the rye that was in the barn. There was still a little wheat in the field that Gran'père had not had time to bring in. They all turned out and gleaned every grain of this and Mère Marie hid it under the floor of the house together with what little had been left in the barn. All of their chickens were taken, too, and there was not much left for them to eat. The Germans were not rough with them and gave them a paper in payment for the things they had taken, but this would not buy food.

Mère Marie, fearing the German soldiers, kept Henri and Lisa closely indoors, and she herself seldom went far from home. Only old Gran'père went out and got the news and came back walking very proudly but with never anything good to tell. The Germans were still pressing on, but Gran'père did not despair. The Belgians had fought bravely, as Belgians should, and they would be delivered out of the hands of the despoiler. But Mère Marie was less hopeful. She very seldom got any sort of news of Père Jean, and so many women were mourning their dead that she became very sad and frightened, especially after she learned that Joseph Verbeeck had been killed by a bursting shell. She also heard other things from the lips of her panic-stricken neighbours which made her shudder and draw wee Lisa very close.

Again the Germans came a few weeks later and searched the house and outbuildings for anything they might find useful. They did not discover Mère Marie's little hoard, and

one of the soldiers, who seemed to be an officer, became very angry and talked very loud, though they could not understand him. When he went out to the barn he broke down the door with his foot, though Henri would have shown him how to open it.

But one of the soldiers was not so unkind. He stood apart, seeming to be standing guard at the door, and when the officer swore he appeared not to approve, though he said nothing. He was a young Bavarian, with a round, smooth-shaven face and eyes very far apart, and with the heavy red hands of a peasant. Something about him attracted little Lisa, and when Mère Marie was occupied with the other soldiers the child slipped out unnoticed and went up to him.

Nobody had ever had occasion to instruct wee Lisa as to the iniquity of staring, and she stood now with frankly curious eyes gazing full on the soldier's broad face. He looked almost like an overgrown toy as he stood there so straight with his heels close together

and his round red face appearing so abruptly above his gray coat with its shiny rows of brass buttons. She hesitated to break the spell that seemed to have turned this ruddy man into a wooden image, but the soldier could not long withstand her intent scrutiny and gradually his face relaxed into a smile.

It was a very pleasant smile and it gave Lisa a warm feeling inside. It suddenly occurred to her that this was the first genuine, unforced smile she had seen for some time. Surely these German soldiers weren't such terrible monsters, after all. Indeed, one could easily learn to like this one.

Of course wee Lisa was not old enough to know that if all Germans were Bavarian peasants, and all Russians were Polish moujiks, there would be no war at all.

Gran'père had complained sometimes of being stiff in the joints, and Lisa wondered if this soldier might not be suffering from an acute attack of this affliction. She did not



know just how to put her question, so she asked, in Flemish, "Do you bend?"

Lisa had a sweet little voice for one pitched in so high a key, and it made the soldier smile more broadly. He shook his head and uttered some extraordinarily gruff words that meant nothing to Lisa. She was satisfied that he did not bend, though somewhat reassured by the apparent mobility of his neck.

Her eye was attracted by a slight movement of his right hand, which hung by his side, and going quickly over to him she raised it and discovered that his arm, at least, was quite properly hung from the shoulder. Whereat the soldier laughed aloud, but checked himself very suddenly as his comrades and the officer appeared from around the house. Then Lisa heard her mother calling her, and hastened in.

After a final inspection of the house the officer called to the soldier in front and they all started off across the fields toward Madame Verbeek's house. As they passed

the kitchen window bold little Lisa thrust her head out, and the Bavarian soldier brushed his lips across the top of her yellow head so quickly that no one saw, not even the vigilant officer nor anxious Mère Marie. Lisa called a shrill good-bye after him and waved her hand, but he marched straight ahead with the others without turning back. Perhaps he heard, though.

After the soldiers had failed to find the grain under the floor, Mère Marie felt quite safe, but she began to be worried about the small quantity. No one seemed to know how long the war would last. One said three years; another believed the English would be over in a few weeks, and then the Germans would go flying back home; others declared that, whatever happened, Belgium was doomed, and the sooner the poor people left the country the better.

Mère Marie did not know whom to believe, but she decided that it would be only prudent to husband her little store of grain so that

it would last all winter. She estimated the amount on hand, and also the late cabbages and turnips and everything else she could count on for food, and divided the whole by the number of winter days. When she discovered how little that allowed for each day, with nothing extra for Sundays, she began to be frightened. She consulted Gran'père, and he agreed that they should restrict themselves to short rations.

Mère Marie explained this to the children as best she could, but little Lisa did not understand very well. So when she discovered how very little she might have to eat, even when she was most hungry, she would cry sometimes. But Henri, who was nearly nine years old now and had been learning much about the doctrine of courage from Gran'père, bore the deprivation without complaint and even shared his last few morsels with Lisa.

It would seem as though the Van Huyks had suffered enough for one family, but when

you remember all the poor Belgian families that had been left starving or had been broken up or sent fleeing to strange lands or wiped out altogether, when you recall what happened about Aershot and Louvain, you will see that the Van Huyks still had something to be thankful for even when the worst came. For they were still all alive and well; even Père Jean had not yet been reported among the dead or missing; while all Belgium was lying prostrate beneath a load of want and sorrow and horrible dread. For war is cruel and winter is cruel, and the poor folk of Flanders and Brabant were without hope.

Late in October there came a banging of rifle-butts on the door and again a group of soldiers in green-blue overcoats invaded the little tile-roofed cottage on the Waterloo Road. They had been drinking and were very rude and boisterous. They ransacked the premises and cursed because they found so little. One of them struck old Gran'père

across the face with the back of his hand and another seized Mère Marie and, in spite of her struggles, kissed her on the cheek. Worse things might have befallen them had not one of the soldiers, angered at the lack of loot, set fire to the house and the barn.

As the flames started up, brisk and crackling, the soldiers seemed to become suddenly sobered and alarmed. Perhaps they were not allowed to do such things. At any rate, they set off up the road, leaving the little homestead blazing behind them.

Mère Marie and Gran'père saved what they could of their humble belongings, the former working in a frenzy of grief, with the tears rolling down her cheeks, while Gran'père's mild features were distorted by a look of defiant hatred. Out in the garden Henri and Lisa stood hand in hand, gazing in silent awe upon the terrible spectacle.

That night they slept under Madame Verbeeck's roof, but she could not keep them; she was afraid to. So the next morning they

started back, sad and despairing, to the smoking ruins of their home.

Out of such boards and tiles as he could find, Gran'père, with Henri's help, built a little one-room shack near where the barn had been, while Mère Marie sought among the ruins for whatever of value might have been spared. Some bedding they had rescued, and Mère Marie found some pots and pans and a few other things that could be used. Her iron cook stove, too, though cracked, still hung together. But the hoarded grain and vegetables, alas! were burned and ruined; there was scarcely a bushel left that was fit for food.

Gran'père set up the stove in the shack and built a rude table and benches and bunks. He had a stout heart in his old breast, Gran'père had, and though he didn't talk much he kept Mère Marie from breaking down. Then they all set to work gathering dried grass and weeds for their beds, and by night-fall their poor little home was furnished.

A few days later they heard again the tramp of marching feet on the road, and from their doorway watched a company of German soldiers file past. Mère Marie was not afraid of them now; it seemed to her that they had done their worst. Gran'père stood very erect and grim and silent, but wee Lisa suddenly ran out with a glad little cry, waving her arms. In the company she had recognized her Bavarian friend. He turned his head for a moment, but his face was expressionless, and he did not leave the ranks. So Lisa wept with disappointment.

But next day he came, quietly, after sundown. He was alone and he knocked softly before entering the shack. Without speaking he laid a half loaf of rye bread on the table and a small piece of bacon. Gran'père looked very proud and angry and was all for throwing them in his face, but Lisa ran up to him joyfully, and he smiled a little as he patted her head, so Gran'père allowed the food to remain. Then the soldier looked at

Mère Marie with a very sad and tender expression in his eyes and strode away in the darkness.

“He has little ones of his own,” said Mère Marie.

Before long the weather grew very cold. Gran’père mended a spade and banked up the shack on all sides and put sods on the roof. There was plenty of fuel among the charred ruins of the house and outbuildings, so that they were able to keep fairly comfortable inside the shack, but all their warm winter clothing had been burned and they suffered from cold whenever they went out. Their shoes, too, were getting thin and worn, and all but one pair of Gran’père’s sabots had been burned.

Worst of all, there was little or nothing to do, and they had all been so industrious. This was bad for Mère Marie especially, and she took to brooding beside the stove and thinking of Père Jean and all the happy days gone by.

As the winter drew on and the snow came their life developed into a mere desperate struggle against hunger and cold. Several times Lisa's Bavarian friend came stealthily and brought food, but they never knew what the next day might have in store for them. Many of their neighbours had fled, but Gran'père insisted on staying on their land, and indeed they knew of no place whither they might fly.

One day the young Bavarian came very hurriedly and threw a sack of bread upon the table. He could not explain where he had got it; perhaps he had stolen it. But he made them understand that he was ordered away to the west and could not come any more. They were all sad and troubled. Then the soldier picked up little Lisa and kissed her long and tenderly, and shook hands with the rest. Even Gran'père did not refuse him.

"Adieu," said Mère Marie, "and God bless you!"

“Adieu,” said the soldier in queer-sounding French, and when he went out there were tears in the honest blue eyes.

“He has little ones at home,” said Mère Marie again. “I hope he will get back to them.”

Mère Marie took the bread and hid it and estimated the smallest amount that would keep body and soul together each day. Then they all sat down and waited. There was nothing else to do.

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VII

Every night and every morning Mère Marie said her prayers to the Virgin, and at last help came. A strange man who spoke English visited the shack, took their names, and made a note of their condition. Mère Marie had learned a few words of English from some of her customers in the Avenue Louise, and she gathered that he was to bring them something that had been sent in a big ship by kind people from away across the sea who had in some way heard of the plight of Gran'père and Mère Marie and Henri and wee Lisa. So they all waited anxiously for his return.

In a few days he came again in a motor car and brought them a big box. He bade them be of good courage and said that he might bring more later. He was a very brisk,

businesslike sort of person, but not unkindly. Then he hurried off again.

The family gathered closely around as Gran'père opened the box, and very excitedly they watched him take out flour, tea, sugar, and clothing. Then Mère Marie fell on her knees beside her bunk and buried her head in her arms, and they all waited with bowed heads while she sent up her thanks.

Then they began examining the clothing. There was a gray fur coat for Mère Marie, worn bare at the collar and wrists, but very warm. There were shoes and stockings and underclothes, a red jacket that could be cut down for Lisa, and some cloth that could be made into a coat for Henri. For Gran'père there was a strange garment that he afterward learned was a sweater. It was thick and black and had a big green D on the front of it. Gran'père did not understand the meaning of the letter, but he found the garment very warm.

Down in the bottom of the box there was a



child's book with the most wonderful pictures of fairies and queer people all in bright colours, and verses in a strange tongue; and there was a roll of cotton bandages and some medicines in bottles.

They were all quite overjoyed until Henri said, "Now if only Père Jean would come back."

Mère Marie grew sober at that, and wee Lisa added, "And big, shaggy old Pierrot."

It was night by this time, and as they had no lights Mère Marie said they must all go to bed. But suddenly Henri's sharp ears caught a strange sound of sniffing and scratching at the door. Then came a short, sharp bark.

Henri ran and opened the door, and there stood good old Pierrot himself, very gaunt and thin, but Pierrot!

Little Lisa ran and fell squarely upon him, as she had been wont to do in the old, happy days, and a little yelp of pain escaped him. Gran'père pulled her gently away, and poor old Pierrot did his best to leap gayly upon

them with little whines of delight, to show how glad he was.

Yes, he was home again, back among the loved faces and caressing hands that he had dreamed about so long. He could hardly contain himself for joy and nearly wagged his stump tail off in his exuberance. Oh, if he could only speak and tell them everything!

True, this was a strange little house; all the surroundings were strange. But it was home at last! For here were his people, his dear people, and it is folks, after all, that count.

Gran'père understood dogs and knew that Pierrot was hurt, so as soon as he could get the dog and children quiet he brought Pierrot out into the moonlight and examined him.

"Pierrot has been a good soldier," said he.

Then he sent Henri for the roll of bandages and the bottles. So you see the kind people across the sea must have heard of Pierrot, too.

"I fear he will always be lame," said Gran'père. But the children did not seem to be greatly depressed by that. Neither did



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Pierrot, for that matter, for after he had eaten the crust of bread Mère Marie gave him, and had kissed them again all around, he stretched himself out on the edge of Henri's worn, scorched quilt with a great happy sigh, and fell asleep, snoring loudly.

THE END

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